

6257

A N
A P P E N D I X

T O

THE SECOND EDITION

O F

CANDID REFLECTIONS

On the different Manner in which many of
the Learned and Pious have expressed their
Conceptions concerning the DOCTRINE of
the TRINITY.

A D D R E S S E D

To the Rev. Ministers and Gentlemen, Managers of the
Independent Fund in LONDON.

Occasioned by an anonymous Letter to the AUTHOR.

By BENJAMIN FAWCETT, M. A.

*Though the Doctrine of the Trinity is a first principle, yet
I never knew that the particular mode of explanation
was such a first principle also.*

Dr. Watts's Letter to Rev. T. Bradbury.

S H R E W S B U R Y:

Printed by J. EDDOWES; and sold by J. BUCKLAND,
at No. 57, Paternoster-Row, LONDON, 1780.

[Price Six-pence.]





A P P E N D I X

T O

CANDID REFLECTIONS, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

I BEG leave to address you in your collective capacity, the propriety of which will, I hope, appear in the following pages. I have considered every animadversion on my *candid reflections* as a real favour. The cause of truth needs and deserves the assistance of all its friends. This induced me to answer, in my *second edition*, those *manuscript letters* with which I was honoured in consequence of my *first edition*, though *that* edition was never properly made publick. It is remarkable, that those letters came from none but your own *members*, except one from a dignified clergyman. I shall now consider a late *anonymous letter from the press*, as coming also from you, which common fame ascribes to

B

one

one of you, and was at least written by one in connection with you; viz. *A letter to the Rev. Benjamin Fawcett, M. A. occasioned by his pamphlet, intitled, candid reflections, &c.*

Theological controversy has little inviting in its nature, though conducted on the most liberal principles, and with a temper and manner the most amiable. But when it becomes personal, it is sure to disgust. The sentimental reader laments, that reason and argument evaporate amidst unnatural heat; that expressions are tortured for meanings, which were never intended; and that both sides loudly recriminate, when probably there is nothing culpable, but needless suspicion, or a mere mistaking of undefined terms. Since it is judged necessary for me to tread this dangerous path, may my safety consist in truth, and candour, and the spirit of meekness, though it be but as it were foolishly in this confidence of self-justification.

The letter to me demands my attention, more to the manner in which a variety of *facts* are represented, than to any thing that is properly *argumentative*. As for instance, it accuses me [p. 10—13] with “endeavouring to stab the character of Athanasius.” I have produced historical evidences concerning his immorality and bigotry, the authenticity of which is not yet disproved [*candid reflections, 2d edit. p. 14, 15.*] My remarker is “surprized, that such a gentleman as Mr.

“ Robinson,

" Robinson, who pleads for the Divinity of
 " Christ, should, on such sort of evidence,
 " so fully give up *Athanasius*, and represent
 " him as an enormous sinner; though he has
 " thought fit to leave out those words in a
 " subsequent edition of his *plea*." The omis-
 sion, in Mr. Robinson's 2d edit. was not by
 any means a retractation, as he himself is
 free to declare, whenever he is applied to.
 " Such strictures on so distinguished a person
 " as *Athanasius* are thought by some to be
 " altogether invidious, and to have nothing
 " to do with the doctrine of the Trinity;
 " while others have judged it of no little
 " importance, both to historical and theolo-
 " gical truth, thus to lay open the sources,
 " from whence the church of Christ has de-
 " rived, for so many centuries, a considerable
 " part of its infelicity and dishonour." [*candid reflections*, 2d edit. p. 16.] Indeed my re-
 marker pertinently observes, " It is not from
 " the character or authority of men, but
 " from the evidence of the divine testimony,
 " that the christian believes the doctrine of
 " the Trinity." And might he not as per-
 tinently have added, that therefore *Athanasius*
 should not have been canonized, nor set on
 a level with Apostles; nor should *Arius*'s
 death have been charged as a punishment
 which heaven inflicted upon him for his pe-
 culiar doctrine. [*candid reflections*, 2d edit.
 p. 59.]

I am also accused [letter, p. 14, 15] with
 " attempting to depreciate the character of
 " *Calvin*." My *remarker* might have added
Cranmer to *Calvin*; for I treat them both
 with the same censure, and with the same
 apology. My words are these, " Thus *Calvin*
 " pleaded conscience, when he persecuted *Ser-
 " vetus* to a violent death. Archbishop *Cran-
 " mer* as conscientiously concurred with the
 " persecutors of *Lambert* the martyr, and read
 " the sentence of his burning at the stake.
 " It must be allowed, that both *Calvin* and
 " *Cranmer* acted according to the mistaken
 " but prevailing spirit of the age in which
 " they lived, when persecution for mere sen-
 " timents in religion was adopted by every
 " party that happened to rule." [*candid re-
 flections*, 2d edit. p. 64.] I also say of him
 [p. 21] " Had he himself, and the age in
 " which he lived, entertained just views of
 " the nature and extent of *christian liberty*,
 " and the *right of private judgment*; in that
 " case, his excellent pen would undoubtedly
 " have transmitted to posterity such animad-
 " versions [on the council of *Nice*,] as we
 " meet with in the great writers of happier
 " and more enlightened times."

A disagreement is pointed out [letter, p. 38] between my manner of quoting a passage from *Calvin*, in my *first* and *second edit.* of my *candid reflections*. The case, Gentlemen, is plainly this. I copied *Calvin's* words, as they stand

stand in my *first edit.* from a learned but anonymous writer of the last century. On that *edit.* Dr. *St-ff-rd* favoured me with a long letter of remarks, among which he was pleased to ask me this question, and return himself the following answer. "Did you "know so little of the judicious *Calvin*, as "to suppose him capable of saying, *The word* " *Trinity is barbarous*, &c.? I am persuaded, "that no such words are to be found in any "of his writings." Such a declaration led me, as it ought to do, to compare the passage, which I had quoted at second hand, with the original, and to produce it, in my *2d edit.* in its real state. Thus I was laid under greater obligations to the Dr. than he at first intended to confer.

My quotation from Mr. *Halyburton* [*candid reflections*, *2d edit.* p. 73] is mentioned as "an unmanly attempt to support a cause." [letter, p. 39, 40.] This remark is only made, because I omitted the words, *Oath of abjuration*. I well remember, that those words were inserted in my *short hand copy*, but in transcribing for the press were inadvertently omitted. Yet, without those words, the quotation answers its purpose. For it does not stand among those passages, which I quote from various writers, to show their sentiments about the Trinity: but in that part of my *candid reflections*, in which I am only suggesting to my friend a proper answer to such

of his guests, who might talk in the too common censorious style. If Mr. Halyburton's friends made a point of conscience of taking, or not taking, the *Oath of abjuration*, his reasoning is just, and holds good, with regard to any other test, by which the consciences of good men may be perplexed. There are many instances of a similar manner of quotation ; as when the Apostle directs, concerning the distinctions of days or meats, *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind — Let not your good be evil spoken of.* Or, when he concludes, *Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* We apply such passages of scripture to a variety of casuistical purposes, though very different from, and without any explicit reference to, the Apostle's immediate design. Yet as scripture is always at hand to be consulted, which cannot be said of Mr. Halyburton's life, therefore on this account principally it is expedient to insert, in the passage quoted from him, the words, *Oath of Abjuration* ; and they shall be so inserted, if a third edition of *candid reflections* should be called for.

I am charged [letter, p. 41] with " an " inclination to lessen the reputation of my " Brethren in the esteem of professing chris- " tians." Pray, Gentlemen, have my *candid reflections* meddled with one personal character, without historical evidence to support it ? Have I not there illustrated my subject merely

in its reference to our common christianity ? Is the holding up of the truth a crime, only because some of my Brethren may be offended with it, or condemned by it ? See how I treated such a charge, when, in a letter to Rev. *R-k-r*, Jan. 10, 1778, I told him, " We have differed in a matter of mere opinion, but it never appeared to me to relate to moral conduct. After all, if you should continue to charge me with falsehood, and refuse to tell me why, I will apply to you, what *Calvin* said of *Luther*, " Though Mr. *R-k-r* call me a devil, I will honour him as a faithful minister of Christ." To that letter Mr. *R-k-r* never returned any answer.

The conduct of Mr. *R-k-r* relative to my son's ordination is greatly misrepresented. [letter, p. 42—44.] He is said to be invited to the ordination *only the day before*, instead of at least *a fortnight before*, even as early as any other minister, and with additional circumstances of respect. His *distance* from *Beaminster* is mentioned, as an apology for his not coming till the morning of the ordination-day : though *Bridport* is but *six* measured miles from *Beaminster*, none of the ministers living so near, and most of them above *twenty* or *thirty* miles from thence. And his conversation with my son is so told, as manifests the unhappy influence of partiality and prejudice, rather than

a strict regard to the real state of the fact. I am very willing to hope, that my *remarker* writ according to the best of his knowledge; but, granting this, he certainly is not without blame, since he might very easily have obtained better information, and in much less time than *three years*. My son gave the following circumstantial account of the affair, in a letter to the late Rev. Dr. *Wilton*, dated Sept. 3d, 1777, which I have the best reason to credit, as every particular was, either transacted in my presence, or immediately communicated to me. " At " least *a fortnight* before the ordination, says " he, I waited upon Mr. *R-k-r* at *his own* " *house*, and told him, I was to be ordained " on such a day [June 26, 1776,] and beg- " ged the favour of *his company and assist-* " *ance*. At that time I had in my own " mind fixed upon Mr. *R-k-r* to take the " *prayer before sermon*. But as I knew, and " as Mr. *R-k-r* himself has since acknow- " ledged, that it is not usual to engage " any particular person for that part, till " the appointed day, I did not then men- " tion it to him. However, by the advice " of a friend, who was better acquainted " with Mr. *R-k-r's* temper and disposition " than myself, in order to prevent all pos- " sible occasion of offence, on the monday " before the ordination [which was on a " wednesday] I wrote a letter to Mr. *R-k-r* " by

“ by the post, which reached *Bridport* the
“ same day, informing him what ministers
“ I had engaged for the *sermon, ordination-*
“ *prayer*, and the *charge*, and begging the
“ favour of him to pray before the *sermon*.
“ In consequence of this, I expected to have
“ seen Mr. *R-k-r* at my house on the tues-
“ day evening. To my surprize, he did
“ not come till about a quarter of an hour
“ before the time appointed for beginning
“ the publick service. He immediately took
“ me aside, and said, he had received a
“ letter from me, desiring him to pray be-
“ fore the *sermon*, and should therefore be
“ glad to know, whether that was really
“ my desire? I answered, it was. He then
“ said, he a little wondered at the manner
“ of my invitation, and could not but look
“ upon it as a slight. I told him, I was
“ sorry he should conceive of it in that
“ light, for I could assure him there was
“ no slight intended. He said, he himself
“ and many of his friends could not but
“ think so, and that if he had been pro-
“ perly invited, he should have taken an
“ opportunity of talking with me some time
“ before upon the subject. However, says
“ he, I shall overlook that; only you will
“ observe, that I always make it a matter
“ of conscience, before I engage in the or-
“ dination of any minister, to be satisfied
“ that he believes in the true and proper
“ deity

" deity of Christ, and you know best how
 " it is with you. I answered, Sir, if you
 " had been here last night, you would have
 " heard how I have expressed myself in my
 " confession. Oh! says he, what! have you
 " a confession then? I heard you was to
 " have none. Yes, Sir, I replied, I have,
 " and if you please you shall hear that part
 " of it. I then took it out of my pocket,
 " and read the following words, which con-
 " tain all I said upon that doctrine. *For ac-*
 " *complishing this glorious purpose [viz. the*
 " salvation of men] revelation informs me,
 " that the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom, as
 " the divine Word, dwells all the fulness of
 " the Godhead bodily, and by whom God creat-
 " ed the heaven and the earth, clothed him-
 " self in human flesh, &c. Upon this he
 " said, that what I had there written, did
 " not satisfy him; he desired to know, whe-
 " ther I believed, That Christ in his superi-
 " our nature was truly and properly God in
 " the highest sense of the word? Being
 " desirous that he should fully understand
 " my meaning, I answered, That I did not
 " think Christ had a divine nature distin^ct
 " from the Father, for then there must be
 " two Gods; but I believed, that the God-
 " head of the Father was so mysteriously
 " united to the person of Christ, or so dwelt
 " in him, that on that account he is in scrip-
 " ture called God. He said, *The in-dwell-*
 " *ing*

"ing scheme did not satisfy him; and added,
 "Do you believe that Christ is God in the
 "same sense as the Father? After pausing
 "a little, I said, I did not understand his
 "question, for if in that connection it con-
 "veyed any idea at all, it was, that there
 "are two independant and equal Gods, and
 "therefore I could not assent to it. Then,
 "says he, I cannot satisfy my conscience to
 "engage in the ordination."

Surely, Gentlemen, Mr. *R-k-r* should have talked with my son, when my son waited upon him at his own house in *Bridport*, a fortnight before the ordination; or Mr. *R-k-r* should have been present at *Beaminster*, the evening before the ordination, when the confession was read in the presence of the senior ministers; or he should, in the morning of the ordination-day, have spoke to my son in their presence. This is manifest, that while my son thought Mr. *R-k-r*'s language was *Tritheistick*, yet he sincerely wished him to engage in his ordination. On the other hand, while Mr. *R-k-r* perceived my son's language was *scriptural*, yet he absolutely refused his assistance. It is also manifest, that though Mr. *R-k-r* objected to my son's sentiments, it was not as *Socinian*, nor *Arian*, nor *Sabellian*, but because the *in-dwelling scheme did not satisfy him*. My son could with perfect complacency hear Mr. *R-k-r* express his dissatisfaction, with what

what he called *the in-dwelling scheme*; but he thought Mr. R-k-r was not to be justified, when he treated him as an *excommunicated person*, only for adhering to what, he apprehends, looks like the very scheme of revelation. Can any thing be, or seem to be, more express for *the in-dwelling scheme*, than our Lord's words? *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* *The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.* *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* These are some of the scripture passages, to which Dr. Doddridge refers for the support of his *fifth proposition*: viz. "That "God is so united to the derived nature "of Christ, and so dwells in it, that by "virtue of such union Christ may be pro- "perly called God, and such regards are "due to him, as are not due to any creat- "ed nature, or mere creature, be it in it- "self ever so excellent." [*candid reflections*, 2d edit. p. 31.] Had Mr. R-k-r given himself time to enquire, in what sense my son understood, *The fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Christ*, he could have assured him, that the following note of Dr. Doddridge on that text speaks his genuine sentiments. "I might, says the Dr. have ren- "dered it, in whom the whole fulness of Deity "substantially dwells. It is plain, that the "Godhead

" *Godhead* is an *anglicism* equivalent to *Deity*.
 " And I cannot think that these wonderful
 " words are intended *merely* to signify, that
 " God hath lodged in the hands of *Christ*,
 " a *fulness of gifts* to be conferred upon
 " men; as if the passage was merely pa-
 " rallel to *Eph.* iii. 19. and *John* i. 16, 17.
 " as Mr. *Peirce* explains it; while *Socinus*
 " sinks it yet lower, as if it only referred
 " to his compleat knowledge of the divine
 " will. I assuredly believe, that, as it con-
 " tains an evident allusion to, the *Shechinah*
 " in which God dwelt, so it ultimately re-
 " fers to the adorable mystery of the union
 " of the *divine* and *human* natures, in the
 " person of the glorious *Emanuel*, which
 " makes him such an object of our hope
 " and confidence, as the most exalted *crea-
 " ture*, with the most glorious endowments
 " could never, of himself, be."

What my own thoughts were, and still
 are, of Mr. *R-k-r*'s converse with my son,
 may be fully seen, in the following extract
 from a letter I writ to him, Nov. 29th,
 1777, and to which also he never returned
 any answer. " On seeing the *second edition*
 " of my *candid reflections*, I hope, Sir, you
 " will have the same reflection to make as
 " on the *first*, *That a stranger to the Bea-
 " minster ordination could not know the print-
 " ed letter had any reference to it*. No, Sir,
 " from first to last I have considered the
 " subject,

" subject, as it relates to our common chris-
 " tianity, and not to any thing personal.
 " I well knew that conscience was the guide,
 " both to you, and my son; and therefore
 " I concluded, that my only way of treat-
 " ing such a subject ought to be this; To
 " appeal to those principles, by which alone
 " conscience should be enlightened and de-
 " termined. — You may probably remember,
 " what one of the old *Nonconformists* said
 " to a persecuting Bishop, *That the man, to*
 " *whom he refused the right hand of fellow-*
 " *ship, held communion with God.* Dr. *Guise*
 " always gave the right hand of fellowship to
 " Dr. *Watts* and Dr. *Doddridge*. I wish you
 " did so to those, who are now in no other
 " sentiments than *Watts's* and *Doddridge's*.
 " I am verily persuaded, this would be no
 " grief of heart to you, whenever you shall
 " lie on a dying bed."

You are not ignorant, Gentlemen, that
 Mr. *R-k-r* has since treated, in the same
 manner as my son, one of his own pupils,
 Mr. *Joseph Chadwick*, who finished his aca-
 demical education at *Bridport* in the summer
 of 1778, and who immediately removed
 from thence to *Wellington* in *Somerset*, to be
 the stated minister of the people, that for-
 merly enjoyed the labours of my excellent
 friend, the Rev. *Risdon Darracott*. From
Wellington Mr. *Chadwick* wrote an obliging
 letter to Mr. *R-k-r*, dated *July 20, 1778*, in
 which

which he invited his *tutor* to preach at *Wellington* the 31st of the same month, when the neighbouring ministers were also invited, to assist him and his people in praying for a divine blessing on their new relation to each other. Mr. *R.k.r*'s answer, dated *July 25th, 1778*, tells him, " It has not a little grieved your real friends at this place and elsewhere, that on finishing your academical studies, you the same week threw yourself into the arms of those ministers, whose views and conduct are directly opposite to one of the grand designs of this academy, and to some of the leading principles of those judicious persons [*the Rev. Ministers and Gentlemen, managers of the Independant Fund in London*] by whom you was for several years liberally supported. You well know, that, as far as a sense of duty will allow, it is my stated endeavour to be civil, courteous, and beneficent to all; and that, on the other hand, I dare not offer violence to conscience to please any man on earth. You know, that it is my avowed principle, not to join in the religious services of a meeting of ministers with such persons as do not believe, what I judge to be, the proper Divinity of Christ, and that that is with me a parting point." This was very discouraging to a young minister. But it seemed to quicken his zeal and diligence in the

the service of Christ and souls ; nor is he forsaken by his divine Master. In a letter to me, Sept. 15, 1779, he says, " As to " the state of our people, I have the hap- " piness to inform you, that many are un- " der serious impressions. The Lord grant " they may not wear off, but be lasting " and effectual ! The fields seem *white al-* " *ready to harvest.* Oh Sir, when I consider " how kind and gracious the Lord has been " to me, in the course of his providence, " and I hope also in the dispensations of " his grace ; directing my views to sanctuary- " service, raising up friends for my com- " fortable support while in my preparatory " studies, marking out my way so clearly " to this place, granting me the unanimous " esteem and affection of the people, mak- " ing my labours so useful and acceptable " to them ; I may well be filled with won- " der, love and praise ! Lord, let them curse, " but bless thou ! If thou continuest to " shew me tokens for good in my ministe- " rial work, it is enough. I hope their " unkind usage has been sanctified to me. " Oh that it may be so more and more, " to teach me, more effectually than books " could do it, the vanity of the creature ; " the precarious nature of popular applause ; " to direct my views upward to those blest " abodes, where envy and strife are eternal- " ly banished ; and to excite me to seek " the

" the honour and approbation that comes
 " from God only ! " At the close of this
 tender passage, his letter mentions a corre-
 spondence between *your Fund* and him, in the
 winter of 1778, and which his friends advised
 him to publish, as an act of justice to him-
 self, but chiefly in hope of promoting thereby
the further enlargement of religious liberty.
 He however wished to have the publication
 delayed, because his people at *Wellington* were
 going to renew their petition to *your Fund*,
 that the *exhibition*, enjoyed by his predecessors,
 might be continued to him, and that they
 had reason to hope their application would
 succeed better now, than it did a year ago.
 He since informs me, Nov. 24, 1779, that,
 the *second petition* having succeeded no bet-
 ter than the *former*, he is desirous that
 my *appendix* may include the *copies* of the
 said correspondence. In complying with his
 request, I am but illustrating my subject, and
 I hope, Gentlemen, you will find the follow-
 ing *letters* are exactly transcribed.

Taunton, November 14, 1778.

[*Rev. R-d-r to Rev. Chadwick.*]

Rev. Sir,

An hour ago I received a letter from Mr.
B-rb-r of *London*, in which are these words,
 viz. " I applied to the *Fund* for the *Wel-*
lington-people at the last *Meeting*, when a

C " doubt

“ doubt arose whether Mr. *Chadwick* believes
 “ the doctrine of the Trinity, which is re-
 “ garded by us as a doctrine of great im-
 “ portance. Not being able to remove the
 “ difficulty myself, I was desired to write to
 “ you, to enquire into this matter. No time
 “ is to be lost, because the next *Meeting* of
 “ the *Fund* will be on Tuesday, December
 “ 7th. It will give me pleasure, if you are
 “ able to remove the difficulty, and I shall
 “ apply again with the hope of success.” I
 know nothing of it how the doubt arose, but
 think it will be best for you to write your-
 self immediately to the Rev. Mr. *B-rb-r*, *Ar-
 tillery Court, London*. Your best prosperity
 will always rejoice, dear Sir, your affectionate

T. R-d-r.

Wellington, November 23, 1778.

[*Rev. Chadwick to Rev. B-rb-r.*]

Rev. Sir,

Barber

A few days ago I received a letter from Mr. *R-d-r* of *Taunton*, relating to your application to the *Fund* for our people; when, as he informs me, a doubt arose, whether I believe the doctrine of the Trinity, which is considered by the *members* of the *society* as a doctrine of great importance. In answer to the above, I would use great plainness of speech, in humbly submitting the following thoughts to your attention and candour.—

As

As to what relates to the niceties of human invention and interpretation, in explaining a doctrine so sublime, so mysterious, and so peculiar to revelation, I am intirely of the opinion of Dr. Doddridge, in his *lectures* on the subject, and of Mr. Fawcett in his enlargement on that part of the Dr's. *lectures* in his *candid reflections*. In consequence of this opinion, I never make any attempt to explain it. I reject all those words and phrases of human invention, which have been introduced, in order to throw a light upon it, but have in reality cast a veil of obscurity over it, and involved the minds of serious, thoughtful persons in a world of perplexity, confusion and distress. I can assure you, Sir, I write from experience very dearly purchased. Phrases and terms of art, which have no determinate meaning affixed to them, appear to me to be very improper to be used in defending a doctrine, which its advocates consider to be of infinite importance. But if the conclusion be of such moment, I think it behoves us to look well to the premises. Otherwise we shall be like those foolish builders, of whom our Lord speaks, who *build upon a sandy foundation*. On this account I prefer scripture-language, and reject all technical words and phrases, when speaking of a doctrine peculiar to scripture. The Apostle *Paul* seems to lay a very great stress on the words which the *Holy Ghost* teacheth, in opposition

position to those which are invented by *man's wisdom*. *Which things we speak*. What things? Are they not *the deep things of God*, of which he was speaking in the preceding verses? — But though I discard human inventions, because I cannot understand them; I *have not so learned Christ*, as to treat the sublime and mysterious things of his gospel in that manner. No, the searcher of hearts knows, that it has long been my earnest desire to submit my reason and understanding to the teachings of his written word, and the illumination of his Spirit, to lead me into the true meaning of its important contents, that so I might be qualified to instruct others, as well as experience its sanctifying influence on my own soul. It is my sincere desire to yield an implicit faith to all that God has revealed in the scripture, on the authority and veracity of the great revealer. I can chearfully adopt the language of the great Mr. *Chillingworth*: “Propose “me any thing out of this book [the Bible], “and require whether I believe or no, and “seem it ever so incomprehensible to human “reason, I will subscribe it with hand and “heart, as knowing no demonstration can be “stronger than this, *God hath said so, therefore it is true.*” — It seemed needful to make some previous remarks of this nature, that I might not be misunderstood in what follows. I now come directly to the point, and

and declare my belief of the doctrine of the Trinity, as it is left on record in the New Testament, without the incumbrance of any human scheme. I believe *There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are one.* If it be asked, how they are three? and how one? I freely own, I cannot tell. Neither can I find it precisely determined in any other passage of scripture. It must therefore be acknowledged an inexplicable mystery. Nor should we wonder, that we are much confounded, when enquiring into the curiosities of such questions, if we consider how little we know of our own nature and manner of existence. — To convince you, Sir, that I do not consider the scripture account of things of this nature as a matter of indifference, I will give you an extract from one of my own sermons with regard to the infinite dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ. In shewing the import of the Title of Lord, when applied to our blessed Redeemer, I observed among other things, “ That it imports an acknowledgment of his transcendant dignity and glory, as the incomprehensible Word, who was in the beginning with God, and who was God, by whom all things were created, and without whom was not made so much as one single being. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible,

" whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. John i. Col. i. 16, 17. And it is on this account, that the inspired writer of the epistle to the Hebrews offers ascription of praise to our adorable Redeemer. Heb. i. 12. And it was a full conviction of the true and proper Divinity of our blessed Lord, that forced a disciple, remarkable for distrust and unbelief, to address him as *his Lord and his God*. John xx. 28: An ascription, both false and blasphemous, on the supposition of our Lord's being nothing more than a mere creature. And we may be sure, that this being the case, would have been followed by a severe reproof, instead of words of approbation. It might be subjoined, true christians are described by the Apostle, as persons who *call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*. 1 Cor. i. 2. Thus it appears, that calling Christ, Lord, Lord, imports an acknowledgment of his transcendent dignity and glory, as possessed of a nature truly and properly divine, as *over all God blessed for ever*." — I adopt no scheme, because every scheme has great difficulties attending it. I cannot rest satisfied in any thing, but what God has revealed in his word concerning it. I am persuaded there are some things in the sacred writings, relative

to this doctrine, that are hard to be understood, and which will never be thoroughly cleared up in this state of darkness and imperfection. They who have the greatest sagacity and penetration to enable them to discern the things that differ, now know but in part, and see through a glass, darkly. To have a clearer insight into the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, will, I doubt not, make up a considerable part of the happiness of good men in a future state, where puzzling doubts and perplexing difficulties are for ever done away.

— Thus, Sir, I have, with the greatest frankness, given you my sentiments on the subject of your enquiry. I am not much concerned, on my own account, how they may be relished by the Gentlemen of the society. It is a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment. I should be sorry, however, on account of the people, should the usual exhibition be withheld, as the generality of them are very poor, so that they would find it difficult to support a minister without it. — If I should after all be deemed erroneous and heretical, my rejoicing is this, the testimony of my conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, in the gospel, and I hope by the influence of his grace upon my heart, I have my conversation in the world. I do not say this by way of boasting; for I am deeply convinced, that my integrity would soon

fail me, without supernatural support. But *I* know whom *I* have believed, and *I* am fully persuaded that he is able to keep me from falling, and to present me faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. I trust he will so keep me. He has not left me without witness of his favour and regard, in a large variety of instances. He has not, blessed be his name, left me without some tokens for good in my ministerial work. Because the Lord has been my help hitherto, therefore in the shadow of his wings, I trust, *I* shall be enabled to rejoice; though *I* should be forsaken by many of his own servants. But *I* will not trespass on your patience any longer. If there be any thing in my manner of writing that appears disrespectful, I hope, Sir, your candour and gentleness will excuse it; no such thing was in the least intended. I am, Rev. Sir, your humble servant,

Joseph Chadwick.

London, December 1, 1778.

[*Rev. R-ch-rd W-nt-r to Rev. Chadwick.*]

Rev. Sir, ^{Winter}

The letter which you wrote to my brother *B-rb-r* was communicated by him to several ministers, who, upon perusing it, came to a resolution to desire of me, that I would write to you upon the subject. With respect to myself, I am so far satisfied, as you declare

clare your belief of " the infinite dignity " of the Lord Jesus Christ." Though, by the way, it is to be observed, that *that* is a phrase of human invention. I love scripture expressions as well as you. Among others I use this, that *Christ thought it not robbery to be equal with God*; which I would not do, if it were my opinion, that the words are not rightly translated. Now, Sir, my request to you is, in which several of my brethren concur, that you will be explicit on this passage of sacred scripture, whether you do, *ex animo, believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is equal with God the Father?* Whether, when he is styled God in scripture, you understand, that he is inferior to the Father? Or, that he is possessed of the same incommunicable perfections? Or, in one word, whether you believe, that Christ as God is self-existent? Not that I desire you to subscribe to my expression, but that you convey your meaning to me in your own words.—As next monday morning is to be our *Fund-Meeting*, your answer to this is requested by the return of the post. Wishing you the best of blessings, I am, Sir, your humble servant,

R-ch-rd W-nt-r.

Wellington, December 1778.

[Rev. *Chadwick* to Rev. *R-ch-rd W-nt-r.*]

Rev. Sir,

As I did not receive your letter till the saturday after it is dated, I apprehended an answer

answer would not reach you by the monday morning following, and consequently did not think it would make any material difference, whether I writ then, or deferred it two or three posts longer, that I might have a little time to consider the import of your queries. But previous to my affirming or denying any thing concerning them, I would humbly presume to propose a few queries to those *Gentlemen*, at whose critical tribunal I am arraigned. — As I have already renounced every [human] scheme, wherefore should I have questions put to me, which, so far as I am capable of judging of their import, which ever way they are answered, would necessarily involve me in one? I need only take notice of the last query, as all the rest are professedly summed up in that. You ask me, ‘Whether I believe, that Christ as God is self-existent?’ Do you mean another God, equal to, and independant on, God the Father? Or, the same God with the Father? Or, if not, what is meant? For it is necessary, that I should understand the genuine meaning of the question, or else it is impossible for me to give an answer. Is Christ then another God, different from, or the same God with the Father? Can there be more than one Being, that is self-existent? — Those, who are acquainted with me, know, that I am not of a cavilling disposition; neither do I ask questions of this nature, with a view

a view to give offence to any one. I like, however, to be free and open, whatever consequences may follow, as I elsewhere intimated. I know it is much easier, on any particular scheme, to ask hard questions, than to solve the difficulties attending them. — As to the passage of scripture you mention, I have always used it, till I received your letter, as it is in our translation, which I would not have done, had I thought it was not rightly rendered. I still think the original will bear the same rendering; that is, *equal*; though I am not without a doubt, whether, *as*, would not be the most proper. — You desire an explanation of *this passage*. I freely own, I am unequal to the task. It is, in my opinion, one of those sublime and mysterious texts, *which the angels desire to look into*, though they will never be able to comprehend it. I have given you a specimen of my manner of treating things of this nature in the pulpit. I am to set these things before the people, as they are represented in the sacred writings, without intangling myself in the niceties of any scheme. — I give up the phrase, to which you object, to avoid the charge of inconsistency; though I am fully persuaded of its truth and propriety. I am, Rev. Sir, your humble servant,

Joseph Chadwick.

I wish, Gentlemen, you had condescended to answer Mr. Chadwick's queries, as well as

as propose queries to him. This might have led you to define your terms, and consequently to cherish more favourable thoughts of the young minister. [*candid reflections*, 2d edit. p. 91.] He candidly tells you, "I give up the phrase, to which you object." The phrase referred to, was, "The infinite dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ," concerning which Mr. W-n-t-r, by way of reprisal, observes, "That this is a phrase of human invention." In like manner a *Reviewer* of my *candid reflections* says, "We grant our terms &c. to be human; and pray are their's divine?" [*Gospel Magazine*, Feb. 1778.] So my *Remarker* says, "You blame your Trinitarian brethren for using some terms, or phrases, because they are not scriptural." [letter, p. 2.] But, Gentlemen, is it not an answer, as obvious, as it is satisfactory, and by attending to which, Mr. Chadwick had no need to have "given up" his phrase? viz. That while scripture is to be considered as the only standard of divine truth, and while fallible men are to use their own words to explain scripture, yet no merely human words ought ever to come into competition with scripture words, so as to be imposed upon the consciences of our fellow-christians, and that such competition and imposition is the very essence of *Popery*, and the grand engine of persecution.

When

When Mr. *Chadwick* acknowledges, “ I “ am not without a doubt, whether, *as*, “ would not be the most proper rendering,” rather than, *equal*, it reminds me, Gentlemen, of my late excellent friend, Mr. *Joseph Williams*. My *Remarker* advises me [letter, p. 29.] to insert, in my *Extracts from Mr. Williams’s Diary, Meditations, and Letters*, some of his *controversial writings*. I was obliged to refuse another of your worthy *members*, who gave me the same advice, and who therefore favoured me with the perusal of a manuscript, containing several *letters* between Mr. *Williams* and an eminent minister, on the *doctrine of Christ’s Divinity*. In those letters Mr. *Williams* shewed himself, not only a zealous and able advocate for that scripture-doctrine, but even a critick in his *Greek Testament*. Among other critical remarks, he insisted, that the Apostle’s words, which in our version are, *equal with God*, would be better rendered, *as God or like to God*. All these letters are dated in 1742, and therefore about two years before I had the pleasure of knowing Mr. *Williams*, and about two years after the publication of Dr. *Watts’s Glory of Christ as God-Man and Mediator*, a book for which, I well-know, Mr. *Williams* had a high esteem as long as he lived. As for Dr. *Doddridge’s Family Expositor on Philippians*, it was not published till 1756, in which the Dr. illustrates his version

version [thought it not robbery to be as God] with the following note. " So ἵσται Θεός is most exactly rendered, agreeable to the force of ἵσται in many places in the Septuagint, which Dr. Whitby has collected in his note on this place. The proper Greek phrase for equal to God is ἵσται τῷ Θεῷ, which is used John v. 18." That passage in John only represents the manner, in which the enemies of Christ perversly interpreted his claiming God as his Father, and is therefore by no means a parallel with this passage of Paul. The Dr's. paraphrase of this important text fully explains his idea of Christ's pre-existent derived nature as united to Deity; viz. " That illustrious and adorable person, who, being long before his appearance in human flesh, in the form of God, and having been, from eternal ages, possessed of divine perfections and glories, when manifesting himself to the Patriarchs and Prophets of old, thought it not robbery and usurpation to be and appear as God, assuming the highest divine names, titles and attributes, by which the suprem Being has made himself known, and receiving from his servants divine honours and adorations." With this view of the subject, and of this particular text, I have so long considered equal as an unscriptural and tritheistick epithet, when applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, that I have never

ver made use of it in my publick ministrations, as the oldest of my hearers are ready to testify. My *Remarker* therefore, according to his usual unacquaintance with fact, had not the least foundation to add, with reference to his own particular view of this truth, " for which, I apprehend, you were " an advocate in time past." [letter, p. 42.]

By your correspondence with Mr. *Chadwick*, it appears, *Gentlemen*, that you do not object to his sentiments, either as *Socinian*, or *Arian*, or *Sabellian*. You seem to apply to him Mr. *R-k-r*'s conclusion concerning my *son*, " That the indwelling scheme did not satisfy " him." You more than seem to concur with Mr. *R-k-r* in a sentence of *Excommunication*, by withdrawing your *Annual Assistance* from his people at *Wellington*. Though one of your worthy *members* earnestly pleaded with you in behalf of Mr. *Chadwick*, both *last* year and *this*, from a personal knowledge of him, and a high esteem for his serious, experimental, and evangelical ministrations, under which he has had repeated opportunities of sitting; yet you remained inflexible in your resolution against him. But I beseech you, *Gentlemen*, to consider, that you might with greater justice have excommunicated the *Nicene Fathers*, and Dr. *John Owen*, who expressly represent " Christ as derived " from the Father;" and you know, it is impossible to reconcile *derivation* with *self-*

self-existence. [*candid reflections*, 2d edit. p. 8, 27, 38] On the contrary, Dr. Doddridge, with whom Mr. Chadwick agrees, maintains “the union of Christ’s derived nature to “the one self-existent Deity.” [*candid reflections*, 2d edit. p. 31] And surely “Those “that ascribe to Christ an union to the “whole Godhead, cannot be justly supposed “to do him less honour, than others who “only ascribe to him an union with the “second person in the Godhead.” [*candid reflections*, 2d edit. p. 93.]

I have now, *Gentlemen*, been led to illustrate the sentiments of my *candid reflections*, more than I ever expected to have done, by a direct application of them to particular cases. This advantage I owe to the *letter* addressed to me. Indeed I am indebted to it on many accounts. So far as it has the appearance of *argumentative*, it convinces me of no false quotation, or false reasoning. It in no degree disproves, what my *candid reflections* have so fully pointed out, That those who are called *orthodox*, differ among themselves, more than some of them differ from the reputed *heterodox*. Nor does it produce any solid reason, why there should not be that moderation and indulgence, which I recommend, among persons of different sentiments. On this last particular, I have the less need to enlarge here, as an excellent plea for such moderation and

and indulgence is lately published, intitled, *The importance of truth, and the danger of moderation, particularly with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity; investigated in three conferences between an orthodox christian and a moderate man.* The author appears to be an advocate for the *indwelling scheme*, and on the noblest principles of *christian liberty*.

There are, *Gentlemen*, several other particulars in the *letter* to me, that may seem to have escaped my notice; whether they are more or less important, I will here mention them. — It is said, [letter, p. 6] “ The “ objection to the term *person* is removed, “ by the frequent use of it with many re- “ spectable writers.” But with equal propriety might I not say, The term *person*, applied to the Trinity, is objected to by many respectable writers, and therefore ought not to be used at all? The true state of the case is rather this, We should never use the term, without endeavouring to define it, so that our meaning may be clearly ascertained. [*candid reflections*, 2d edit. p. 34—36.]

My *remarker* may be thought to insinuate, [letter, p. 9, 10] that I favour the peculiar notion of Dr. *Clarke* concerning the person of Christ. But it should be remembered, that I have expressly excepted against it. [*candid reflections*, 2d edit. p. 38.]

My *remarker* has a long *note* concerning the *Arians* persecuting the *Orthodox*, [letter,

p. 13] which may seem to suppose, that I am partial to the *Arian* cause. But I have freely and equally condemned all parties, that have persecuted for conscience sake. [*candid reflections*, 2d edit. p. 16, 17, 52, 53.]

I am charged with "an attempt to deceive my readers," [letter, p. 25] only because I ask, "Are they not [the *Antitrinitarians*] perfectly agreed with us in acknowledging one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, and through whom we all have an access by one Spirit unto the Father? Is not such agreement an infinitely stronger bond of union, than any mode of mere human speculation or expression?" [*candid reflections*, 2d edit. p. 74.] I hope, I am a deceiver, in the same sense as Dr. *Watts* was, when he wrote the words, which I have placed as the motto in my title-page; or, like the Apostle *Paul*, when he was made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some.

I must presume myself to have no concern, in what my *remarker* so largely says about *natural religion*. [letter, p. 35—37.] A dignified clergyman having "urged it, as a parallel case, that the doctrine of divine omnipresence is no more capable of particular explanation than this of the Trinity," I desired him to consider, "that the former is a truth of natural religion, while the latter

“ latter absolutely depends on revelation;” only I granted, “ that both, as far as relates to any merely human mode of explaining them, are equally superior to the adequate conception or expression of mortals.” [candid reflections, 2d edit. p. 89.] But my remarker would have it also taken for granted, that the *Athanaian* mode of the Trinity is the scripture doctrine, and as necessary to believe, as the doctrine of the divine Omnipresence.

When my *remarker* distinguishes between exploding the word Trinity, and exploding the use of it, I wish him to consider, whether it be not a distinction without a difference. [letter, p. 33.]

When he represents it to be " my present view, that it is of no great importance, whether we believe the great truths of revelation or not, provided we use the same scripture phrases ;" [letter, p. 35] he speaks without foundation, and inconsistent with what I have said. [*candid reflections*, 2d edit. p. 34, 88.]

My *remarker* even seems to intimate, that I am for having "christians taught moral duties only." [letter, p. 27.] Will he permit me to ask, whether he thinks *The grand Inquiry, Am I in Christ or not*; or *Christian Stedfastness*, a Sermon occasioned by the death of Rev. Risdon Darracott; or *Preaching Christ and not self*, are publications that indicate my teaching mere moral duties? Or whether he

thinks such *merely* moral teaching would have been so far owned of God, as to occasion many to come under religious impressions, with the usual enquiries, *What must we do to be saved? How must we get an interest in Christ, &c. &c. &c.?* But the *gleaning* of my Brethren, may be *better than the vintage* I have gathered, and I bless God for it; nor shall the less be thankful, though their most esteemed *mode* of the Trinity, while honoured with such *usefulness* to souls, be ever so different from my own.

On the whole, Gentlemen, I am free to declare, that my attachment to the *in-dwelling scheme* commenced with my study of Dr. *Doddridge's Lectures*. In this respect, I have always differed from you; nevertheless, I have often had the honour of joining with several of your respectable *members* in the religious services of the same day, and the same pulpit. I hope, I shall never forget my obligations to *your Fund*, for the assistance it afforded to me, between *forty* and *fifty* years ago, while I was a student at *Northampton*. I heartily pray, that *your Fund* may as much subserve the cause of *religious liberty*, as, I doubt not, it is your design to advance by it the kingdom of Christ, and the success of the gospel. While I desire to be thankful to *Civil Government*, for the *lenity* exercised towards me, during the *forty years* in which I have been a preacher, though destitute of *legal*

legal qualification, till I chearfully accepted of it July 13, 1779; I cannot but earnestly wish for your concurrence with the late enlargement of our religious liberties, by softening the terms on which poor *disenting ministers* receive their annual exhibitions at your hands. I beseech you, Gentlemen, seriously to consider, whether it is not a thing much to be feared, that some of our poor Brethren, for the sake of their scanty allowances, yield their assent to what they have little studied; while others, with all their just discernment of judgment, tenderness of conscience, and pious zeal for Christ and souls, have their names struck out of your friendly list. Yet I verily believe, that neither yourselves, nor the *managers* of any other *Fund*, for supporting *ministers* or *students* in *Divinity*, can be too solicitous to procure objects possessed of eminent piety, and of ardent love to Christ, and zeal to exalt him on the throne of every heart. That you may be yet more and more the honoured instruments of advancing this best cause in the world, and particularly in *disenting churches*, is the fervent prayer of,

GENTLEMEN,

Your's, &c.

Kidderminster,
Dec. 2d, 1779.

BOOKS published by the Rev. Mr. B. FAWCETT, and sold by J. Buckland, at No. 57, in Paternoster-Row, London, and J. Eddowes, in Shrewsbury.

1. A Compassionate Address to the Christian Negroes in *Virginia*, and other British Colonies in *North America*. The 2d Edit. Price 3d.
2. The Grand Inquiry, *Am I in Christ or not?* The 4th Edit. 6d.
3. The Sacred Almoner, in two Discourses. 8d.
4. A Sermon occasioned by the Death of K. *George II.* and the Accession of K. *George III.* 6d.
5. A Sermon on the Coronation of K. *George III.* 6d.
6. Children shouting their Hosannas to Christ. A Sermon on the Death of a Child. 3d.
7. Murther lamented and improved. A Sermon, &c. on the Murther of Mr. *Francis Beft*. 6d
8. Heavenly Paths. The 6th Edit. by an anonymous Author. 2d.
9. Abridgment of Mr. *Baxter's* Saints everlasting Rest. The 3d Edit. 3s. **4. OC 58**
10. Dying Thoughts. The 2d Edit. 1s.
11. Life of Faith. Bound 1s. 6d.
12. Dialogues on Personal and Family Religion, between a Minister and one of his Parishioners. To which are added Forms of Prayer for the Family and Closet. The 2d Edit. stitched 1s.
13. Causes and Danger of Slighting Christ and his Gospel. The 3d Edit. 3d.
14. Converse with God in Solitude. 2d Ed. 6d.
15. A Sermon occasioned by the Death of the Rev. Mr. *Darracott*. The 4th Edit. 6d.
16. The Religious Weaver: or, Pious Meditations on the Trade of Weaving. The 2d Edit. 1s.
17. The encouraging Prospect, that Religious Liberty will be enlarged: Considered, and applied to the Case of the Protestant Dissenters: in a Sermon preached at *Kidderminster*, Nov. 5, 1773. 6d.
18. *Preaching Christ, and not self.* A Sermon at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. *Tho. Janes*, May 26, 1774, at *Tucker-Street Meeting, Bristol*. To which are added, Mr. *Janes's* Confession of Faith, and a Charge delivered on the same Occasion, by *A. Kinsman*. 1s.
19. Candid Reflections concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity, in a Letter to a Friend. The 2d Edit. 1s. 6d.
20. Extracts from the Diary, Meditations and Letters, of Mr. *Joseph Williams*, with his Head finely engraved by *Taylor* from an original Picture. Bound in Calf and lettered 3s. 6d. Sheep 3s. **—**